



In Loving Memory of Al-Marhum Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin: A Legacy of Wisdom, Compassion, and Integrity

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GOMBAK, 13 February 2025: Yesterday, on the 12th of February 2025, after performing my Maghrib prayer, I received a WhatsApp message from my department at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The message conveyed the sad news of the passing of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin Abdul Rahman. For a moment, I was stunned by the shock of losing such a remarkable individual. As a token of friendship and appreciation, I am compelled to pen down a few thoughts about the deceased.

His journey to becoming a successful teacher in academia began with his pursuit of a B.A. in English at Florida State University. He later earned a Master of Education in TESOL from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. Finally, he completed his Ph.D. at IIUM.

His research interests are broad and include areas such as teaching reading and writing, learning strategies, language anxiety, assessment in education, and teaching methodology. Besides his teaching, he held positions like Head of the Department of Language and Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, IIUM, and Director of IIUM Centre for Measurement, Evaluation, and Testing (I-MET).

My connection with the late Dr. Zainurin dates back to my time as a postgraduate student at the Kulliyah of Education at IIUM. At one point, as a PhD candidate, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin stepped into my class to replace the late Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohamad Sahari Nordin, who had to be away for a few weeks as a research consultant for the government of Maldives. During that time, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin taught my classmates and I a course on Advanced Statistics. His class was enjoyable and made complex concepts easier for the students to understand. As someone who has always been interested in qualitative research, Prof. Dato' Dr. Sahari and Dr. Zainurin were the ones who changed my perception of quantitative research. From both of them, I learned how to use factor analysis, one of the statistical tools for analyzing data in quantitative research.

When I was appointed as a lecturer at IIUM, my relationship with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin evolved beyond the typical student-teacher dynamic. As we crossed paths during our teaching hours, we would often stop to chat about what was happening in our classrooms and in our families. Compared to the days when he taught me statistics, our bond grew much closer. Conversations with him were always enjoyable. He is a very jovial person who loves to keep those around him happy.

Every morning, before class, I make it a habit to go for a walk along the ring road around the campus. This walk serves as a form of exercise to keep me fit, a moment for reflection, a kind of meditation, and an opportunity to connect with nature. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin, one of the earlier colleagues to arrive on campus, would often shout out to me from his moving vehicle, "Dr. Abbas, Salam." His voice, coming from behind me, would reach my ears somewhere between the roundabout at the main entrance to the university and the Kulliyyah of Education. That voice of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin, echoing in my ears early in the morning, would not only brighten my day but also give me the motivation to face the challenges ahead. Over time, I must admit that my ears became addicted to hearing those familiar words. Now, with that voice gone forever, I will truly miss the person behind it.

I am pleased to share that one of the longest conversations I have ever had with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin took place last year, a week or two before he went on his Hajj pilgrimage. Having performed the pilgrimage a few years ago, he asked me several relevant questions regarding the rituals involved. He was very concerned about ensuring he performed the rituals correctly.

In my interactions and observations of the late Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin, I found him to be a kind and considerate gentleman, someone who held no grudges, worked well with others, and was a critical observer of the world around him. He was always honest, never afraid to speak the truth, and he did so with integrity. As a man of faith and language, his words were always polite and thoughtful. On campus, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainurin made a lasting impression, and his absence is deeply felt by his students and those who knew him. For all the qualities he possessed, may Allah reward him abundantly in the hereafter. Ameen.***

(These are views of Dr. Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak who is affiliated with the Department of Fundamental and Interdisciplinary Studies at AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM which do not represent IIUM Today's.)